



RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One Corliss Park

Providence, RI 02908

SPECIAL MEETING

Date: April 12, 2011

Time: 6:00PM

Minutes recorded by: Nancy Sousa

Minutes approved on:

Interpreters: Jon Henry, Mary Ellen Breen

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE: Jennifer Smith

Attorney: Sara Rapport

Call to Order

Chairperson Travis Zellner called the Special meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:07 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

Roll Call of Board of Trustees

- a. **In Attendance:** Travis Zellner, Mary Wambach, Marie Lynch, Jodi Merryman, Angelo Garcia, Westley Resendes
- b. **Excused:** Harvey Corson, Amy D. Roche, Iraida Williams

Chair noted the Director requested that any discussion re: her position be held in Open Session. All aware that RISD identified as PLA school; several areas need to be discussed – business of the school and operations; purpose of this meeting is to set up things appropriately; want to note to Director that this is not based on her performance, character, mental or physical state – this letter is a formal aspect to announce that Board will not renew the Director's contract – now that school is under PLA status, personnel decisions are on hold. Board recommends that Director should not be serving as primary role with PLA process and CBA negotiations; Mary Pendergast will be the primary person for PLA and CBA negotiations, the Director will continue as secondary person. Member expressed concern re: the letter being presented without a conversation with the Director or other Board members.

Atty. Rapport noted that members should look at this letter as a proposal; after input from the Board, concur by consensus/vote to present letter to Director. Members questioned the process and consequences of this action for staff/students; could Dinaz Adenwalla, Assistant Director, take a primary role and the Board needs to consider the overall consequence to staff; noted that Mary Pendergast works at RISD part-time concerned with staff's response.

Chair noted that Mary Pendergast was placed at RISD thru the PSI for progressive support and to be part of the negotiating team; she is a certified Special Education Administrator; an hourly employee fully funded by IDEA and is committed to working with the Board – whatever PLA model we choose will apply to everyone. In response to staff concerns, we will meet again and get an understanding of roles. Director will continue in her role and Mary Pendergast in her role. In addition to the PLA process work, Mary Pendergast will still be responsible for the special education work, but will be the primary contact person for PLA – we may need some administrative help in some areas. Much discussion ensued re: clarifying roles and moving forward quickly with the PLA process, communicating to parents and stakeholders, partnering with RIDE and families.

Atty. Rapport asked for two separate consensus motions:

1. To not renew Director's contract: Motion was made by Mary Wambach and seconded by Marie Lynch to not renew the Director's contract...all in favor – so moved.
2. Motion to present the letter to Director – all in consensus – so carried.

Atty Rapport further noted that all documents approved and presented in Open Session become public documents.

Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2)

- c. **MOVED Angelo Garcia AND SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:34 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- d. **MOVED Westley Resenders and SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 7:24 p.m.. Approved unanimously.
- e. **MOVED Westley Resendes AND SECONDED Mary Wambach:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

Motions from Executive Session: None

II. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.